

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NAIROB 03139 101435Z

ACTION AF-04

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R 101335Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6721

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 3139

LIMDIS

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJECT: MUNGAI'S VIEWS ON KANU ELECTION

1. SUMMARY: DR. NJOROGE MUNGAI, ONE OF CHIEF CONTENDERS FOR HIGH OFFICE IN KANU NATIONAL PARTY ELECTIONS APRIL 3, CONFIRMED PRIVATELY TO EMBOFF THAT HE WAS STEPPING ASIDE TO PRESERVE PARTY UNITY AND WOULD NOT CONTEST KANU NATIONAL OFFICE. INSTEAD, HE WOULD RETAIN HIS NAIROBI KANU BRANCH CHAIRMANSHIP AND CONCENTRATE ON BUILDING POLITICAL BASE AT THAT LEVEL; NAIROBI CHAIRMANSHIP WILL ALLOW HIM TO PARTICIPATE IN KANU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. HE INDICATED THAT BOTH KANU FACTIONS ARE LIKELY TO SUPPORT FINANCE MINISTER KIBAKI AS UNITY CANDIDATE FOR KANU CHAIRMAN, A POST GENERALLY CONCEDED TO BE TOP JOB FOR A KIKUYU APART FROM KENYATTA'S PRESIDENCY OF KANU. HE EXPECTED HARD-FOUGHT CONTEST BETWEEN TWO GROUPS FOR OTHER SEVEN

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NAIROB 03139 101435Z

NATIONAL POSTS, INCLUDING VICE-PRESIDENT OF KANU; HE WAS CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WOULD BE NO VIOLENCE AND PARTY WOULD EMERGE AS INSTRUMENT CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING UNITY IN POST-KENYATTA PERIOD

END SUMMARY.

2. MUNGAI REQUESTED MEETING WITH EMBOFF THROUGH INTERMEDIARY, INDICATING THAT HE WISHED EMBASSY TO BE "IN THE PICTURE"

REGARDING KANU ELECTIONS. MEETING TOOK PLACE MARCH 10 IN PRIVATE SURROUNDINGS OUTSIDE EMBASSY.

3. MUNGAI, WHO TALKED FREELY FOR OVER AN HOUR WITH LITTLE PROMPTING, INDICATED THAT HE HAD DECIDED NOT TO CONTEST POST OF KANU NATIONAL CHAIRMAN. HE PULLED FROM HIS POCKET A COPY OF KANU CONSTITUTION AND POINTED TO PROVISION WHICH BARS NATIONAL OFFICE-BEARER FROM HOLDING LOCAL-LEVEL OFFICE AT SAME TIME. HE SAID HE BELIEVED PARTY REVITALIZATION PROCESS WOULD GO FORWARD MAINLY AT LOCAL (BRANCH) LEVEL AFTER APRIL 3 ELECTIONS AND HE FELT HIS BEST COURSE OF ACTION WAS TO BUILD POLITICAL BASE IN NAIROBI, WHERE HE WON CONVINCING VICTORY AS BRANCH CHAIRMAN IN JANUARY. BRANCH CHAIRMAN POSITION ENSURED A SEAT FOR HIM ON KANU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, WHICH WOULD ENABLE HIM TO KEEP HIS HAND IN KANU DECISION MAKING.

4. TURNING TO PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN KANU ELECTION CAMPAIGN, MUNGAI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TWO GROUPS HAD EMERGED AS ELECTION PROCESS PROCEEDED FROM GRASS-ROOTS TO NATIONAL LEVEL. OF NINE NATIONAL KANU POSITIONS, NUMBER ONE POST WAS CONCEDED BY ALL TO KENYATTA, AND THERE WAS CONSENSUS THAT REMAINING EIGHT POSTS SHOULD BE FILLED WITH CONSIDERATION FOR GEOGRAPHIC AND TRIBAL BALANCE. PUBLIC ATTENTION HAD CENTERED ON POST OF CHAIRMAN, WHICH HAD BECOME IDENTIFIED WITH CENTRAL PROVINCE, I.E. TO BE FILLED BY A KIKUYU. MUNGAI ARGUED SOMEWHAT DISINGENUOUSLY THAT SINCE KENYATTA CAME FROM KIAMBU AREA OF CENTRAL PROVINCE, CHAIRMAN JOB SHOULD GO TO SOMEONE FROM DIFFERENT PART OF KIKUYULAND. THUS, NEITHER MUNGAI HIMSELF NOR HIS ALLY JAMES GICHURU MET THE CRITERIA OF BALANCE, SINCE THEY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NAIROB 03139 101435Z

ARE BOTH FROM KIAMBU. ON OTHER HAND, KIBAKI IS NORTHERN KIKUYU. KIBAKI WAS SUPPORTED BY MOI AND HIS GROUP MAINLY AS MEANS OF PREVENTING MUNGAI FROM BEING ELECTED TO CHAIRMAN POST; HOWEVER, IN POINT OF FACT, MUNGAI CLAIMED, KIBAKI WAS "ONE OF US." A SLIGHT COMPLICATION AROSE FROM FACT THAT WAIYAKI, "WHO IS ALSO ONE OF US" HAD DECLARED CANDIDACY FOR CHAIRMAN POST -- BUT WAIYAKI IS FROM KIAMBU. MUNGAI SAID HE PLANNED TO MEET WITH KIBAKI AND WAIYAKI TOGETHER ON MARCH 10 TO AGREE ON A NITY CANDIDATE. HE IMPLIED STRONGLY THAT IT WOULD BE KIBAKI.

5. MUNGAI SAID KIBAKI APPEARED TO BE ABLE TO ATTRACT SUPPORT OF BOTH GROUPS AS CHAIRMAN, BUT ALL OTHER NATIONAL KANU POSTS WOULD BE VIGOROUSLY CONTESTED -- INCLUDING VICE PRESIDENT SLOT. HE OFFERED OPINION THAT MOST IMPORTANT POST TO BE FILLED WAS SECRETARY GENERAL, WHO WOULD RUN DAY-TO-DAY KANU AFFAIRS. MUNGAI WAS NOT PREPARED TO SAY WHO HIS GROUP WOULD SUPPORT FOR SECRETARY GENERAL (THE JOB FORMERLY HELD BY TOM MBOYA), BUT HE HINTED THAT IT WOULD BE SOMEBODY FROM WESTERN PROVINCE

(READ MULIRO) OR EASTERN PROVINCE (READ NGEI).

6. THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION, MUNGAI STRESSED THAT KENYA'S COHESION AND UNITY HAD LONG RESTED ON THE SHOULDERS OF KENYATTA. IN FUTURE, THIS UNITY WOULD HAVE TO BE SUPPLIED BY REVITALIZED KANU. HE IMPLIED THAT HE WAS TO SOME EXTENT SACRIFICING HIS PERSONAL AMBITION TO PROMOTE SUCH UNITY, WHICH HE REGARDED AS IMPERATIVE BECAUSE KENYA IS SURROUNDED BY POTENTIALLY HOSTILE NEIGHBORS AND CANNOT AFFORD INTERNAL STRIFE.

7. ASKED ABOUT OGINGA ODINGA'S PROSPECTS FOR POLITICAL COMEBACK, MUNGAI WAS SURPRISINGLY FRANK IN HIS OPINION THAT THIS WAS UNLIKELY -- AND IN ANY EVENT UNDESIRABLE. HE FELT THAT OGINGA ODINGA HAD BEEN TOO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH "EASTERN" (I.E., SOVIET) INFLUENCES IN PAST, AND COULD PLAY VERY DISRUPTIVE ROLE IF ALLOWED TO BECOME ACTIVE IN KANU AGAIN. HE ACKNOWLEDGED OGINGA ODINGA'S SWAY IN LUO TRIBAL AREA, BUT SAID CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NAIROB 03139 101435Z

IT WAS TIME FOR HIM TO GIVE WAY TO YOUNGER LEADERS.

8. MUNGAI IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION DECLARED FORTHRIGHTLY THAT HE INTENDED TO BE CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENTARY SEAT IN 1979.

9. COMMENT: IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER MUNGAI SINCERELY SUBSCRIBES TO PARTY UNITY OR IS SIMPLY PUTTING BEST POSSIBLE FACE ON HIS INABILITY TO WREST CONTROL OF KANU. IT IS ALSO UNCLEAR WHETHER HIS INITIATIVE IN DISCUSSING KANU POLITICS WITH EMBOFF WAS HIS OWN IDEA OR INSPIRED BY OTHERS. MUNGAI SHOWED MILD INTEREST IN HOW EMBASSY SAW CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION, AND SEEMED SATISFIED WITH EMBOFF'S RESPONSE THAT U.S. WAS INTERESTED IN A MODERATE, STABLE KENYA, AND THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE NO IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO CONTENDING GROUPS. AT NO POINT DID MUNGAI DISPLAY ANY FEELING THAT THIS SOMEWHAT REDUCED FORTUNES WERE ATTRIBUTABLE TO U.S. REAL OR IMAGINED SUPPORT FOR HIS OPPONENTS; RATHER, HIS MESSAGE SEEMED TO BE THAT HE IS RECONCILED TO CURRENT POLITICAL REALITIES, PROBABLY BECAUSE MZEE HAS DECIDED HOW THINGS WILL BE.  
MARSHALL

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## Message Attributes

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